



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

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FACT SHEET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Facts About Foster Care

- PROVIDERS**
- The number of licensed foster-family homes in Idaho fluctuates between 800 and 1,000 based on a number of variables.
 - Nationwide, the number of licensed, certified, and approved foster-family (non-relative) homes continues to decline, shrinking 3 percent since 1986 from 146,000 to 142,000 in 2000.
 - Idaho has a shortage of foster families that can take sibling groups, as well as a deficit of Native American and Hispanic foster homes.
- CHILDREN IN CARE**
- The need for foster care is growing dramatically:
- In the last decade, the number of Idaho children placed in foster care has more than tripled from 747 in state fiscal year 1993 to 2,382 in 2003.
 - Nationwide, the number of children in foster care reached 565,000 in 2001, which is more than twice as many as in 1987 (280,000). Each year, nearly 300,000 U.S. children enter foster care.
- CAUSES**
- Children are placed in foster care when their own families are unable to provide them with the safety and protection they need; some of the reasons for removing children from their families include:
- Sexual or physical abuse;
 - Neglect;
 - Abandonment; and
 - Other serious family problems.
- DURATION**
- Usually foster care is needed for a temporary period of time while the issues within the child's family are addressed. Of the 2,008 children who entered Idaho's Foster Care Program in 2000, 86 percent were reunited with their parents or caretakers within 12 months.
- MOTIVES**
- Some of the reasons cited by people who choose to become foster parents are:
- Helping children;
 - Giving back to the community;
 - Possibility of becoming an adoptive parent; and
 - Love for children.

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number of children adopted through Idaho's foster care program has increased from 44 in 1995 to 110 in 2001. Adoptions declined in 2002 to 92 because many families postponed finalization to take advantage of federal tax credit changes that began Jan. 23, 2003.

- Idaho is recruiting for about 35 foster children awaiting adoption.
- Among the children who are adopted through the State's Foster Care Adoption Program, 80 percent are adopted by their foster families, 7 percent are adopted by relatives, and 13 percent are adopted by unrelated families.

IDAHO CARELINE The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare operates the Idaho CareLine, a toll-free telephone information and referral resource of health and human services. Operators answer nearly 50,000 calls annually, about 3 percent of which relate to foster care and adoption. The Idaho CareLine – 1-800-926-2588 – is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mountain time. The Department also operates a separate foster care hotline – 866-4ID-KIDS (866-443-5437).

CALENDAR

- May is National Foster Care Month.
- May is also Idaho Foster Parent Appreciation Month.
- November is National Adoption Month.
- Nov. 22, 2003 is National Adoption Day.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For more information, please contact Mickey Harmer at (208) 334-5695.